

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 ANTANA 01718 130517Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 TRSE-00 IO-13 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 HEW-04 XMB-02 /107 W
-----100410 141109Z /20

R 121340Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 952

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ANTANANARIVO 1718

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM
SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY REPORT: COMOROS

REF: A) STATE 212861 B) STATE 215935

NOTE: THIS REPORT IS BRIEFER THAN MOST FOR SELF-EVIDENT REASONS.

I. A NEW GOVERNMENT WAS INSTALLED IN THE COMOROS ON MAY 13, 1978, WHEN A MOVEMENT SUPPORTING FORMER PRESIDENT AHMED ABDALLAH OVERTURNED THE REGIME OF PRESIDENT ALI SOILIH WHO HAD RULED SINCE EARLY 1976. THE OVERTHROW AND CAPTURE OF ALI SOILIH, WHO WAS SUBSEQUENTLY KILLED TRYING TO ESCAPE, WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY A BAND OF ABOUT 50 EUROPEAN MERCENARIES UNDER THE COMMAND OF COLONEL BOB DENARD, A FRENCH MERCENARY LEADER FORMERLY ACTIVE IN OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA. ALTHOUGH THE NEW COMOROS ISLAMIC FEDERAL REPUBLIC IS NOMINALLY RUN BY A POLITICAL DIRECTORATE UNDER THE CO-PRESIDENCY OF AHMED ABDALLAH AND MOHAMMED AHMED, THE MERCENARIES HAVE REMAINED IN THE ISLANDS AND ARE RUNNING SEVERAL VITAL SERVICES SUCH AS IMMIGRATION,
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 ANTANA 01718 130517Z

CUSTOMS, AIR NAVIGATION, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. BOB DENARD IS COMMANDER OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES AND HAS ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO MAKE THE COMOROS HIS HOME, WHILE AHMED ABDALLAH SAYS THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE MERCENARIES, INCLUDING DENARD, IS ONLY TEMPORARY. A NEW CONSTITUTION IS BEING DRAWN UP WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED TO POPULAR REFERENDUM IN EARLY OCTOBER. NO

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAS VISITED THE ISLANDS
SINCE THE COUP.

1. RESPECT FOR THE INTEEGRITY OF THE PERSON, IN-
CLUDING FREEDOM FROM TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN
OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT, ARBITRA-
RY ARREST OR IMPRISONMENT, DENIAL OF FAIR
PUBLIC TRIAL, AND INVASION OF THE HOME

THERE IS AT PRESENT NO ORGANIC LAW OR ANY OTHER SET OF
LAWS GOVERNING THE COUNTRY. THEREFORE THERE IS NO
LEGAL PROTECTION FOR THE INDIVIDUAL. HOWEVER, WE HAVE
HEARD OF NO INSTANCES OF TORTURE OR OTHER FORMS OF
DEGRADING TREATMENT. THERE ARE NO POLITICAL PRISONERS
AND ONLY GIVE PERSONS, ALL FROM ALI SOILIH'S IMMEDIATE
ENTOURAGE, WERE KILLED DURING THE COUP. THE PRESENCE
OF THE MERCENARIES HAS RESULTED, ACCORDING TO OUR RE-
PORTS, IN A SITUATION WHERE THE POPULATION CAN ENJOY BOTH
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION IN THE POLI-
TICAL PROCESS AND A HIGH DEGREE OF PUBLIC ORDER.

2. GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES RELATING TO THE FULFILLMENT
OF SUCH VITAL NEEDS AS FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH
CARE AND EDUUCATION.

THE ECONOMY OF THE COMOROS HAS BEEN IN BAD SHAPE SINCE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 ANTANA 01718 130517Z

THE FRENCH STOPPED SUBSIDIZING IT IN 1975 AT INDEPENDENCE
AND ALIH SOILIH'S POLICIES FURTHER DETERIORATED THE
SITUATION. THE NEW RULERS HOPE FOR RENEWED SUPPORT
FROM FRANCE AND THE ARAB STATES. THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S
ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE NOT YET BEEN FORMULATED BUT CAN
BE EXPECTED TO LEAN TOWARD A LAISSEZ-FAIRE POLICY AS
AHMED ABDALLAH AND OTHERS OF THE NEW RULING TEAM
WERE WEALTHY MERCHANTS IN THE PAST AND SELF PROCLAIMED
CAPITALISTS.

3. RESPECT FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES,
INCLUDING FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, SPEECH, PRESS,
RELIGION, AND ASSEMBLY, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT
WITHIN THE COUNTRY, FOREIGN TRAVEL AND EMIGRA-
TION, FREEDOM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL
PROCESS.

WE HEAR THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL ACTIVITY
RIGHT NOW CENTERED AROUND THE DRAFTING OF THE NEW
CONSTITUTION, AND THAT INDIVIDUALS ARE FREE TO SPEAK
IN SUPPORT OF THEIR IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE FORM OF THE
GOVERNMENT. THERE IS NO PRESS IN THE COMOROS AND THE

ONE RADIO STATION IS RUN BY AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN IN THE HANDS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THEREFORE CONTINUES TO REFLECT GOVERNMENT POLICY. THERE IS NOW FULL FREEDOM OF WORSHIP, WHEREAS ALI SOILIH HAD TRIED TO REDUCE THE INFLUENCE OF THE MOSLEM CLERGY. WE DO NOT KNOW OF ANY DIFFICULTIES BEING ENCOUNTERED IN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TRAVEL OR EMIGRATION.

4. GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE AND RECORD REGARDING INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

THERE IS NO RECORD OF ANY ATTITUDE ON THIS SUBJECT.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 ANTANA 01718 130517Z

II. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I HOPE AF CAN DO WITHOUT DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS PENDING THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. ALL THAT CAN BE SAID RIGHT NOW IS THAT THE COMORIAN NEED FOR ECONOMIC SUPPORT FOR MERE SURVIVAL, NOT TO SPEAK OF DEVELOPMENT, WOULD GIVE US CONSIDERABLE LEVERAGE.

BARRETT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ANTANA01718
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780373-0873
Format: TEL
From: ANTANANARIVO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780974/aaaacixz.tel
Line Count: 145
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2cdedf51-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 212861, 78 STATE 215935
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1459693
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY REPORT: COMOROS
TAGS: SHUM, CN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2cdedf51-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014